

BITS OF TRAVEL.

VIII.

BERN AND LUCERNE.

THE Bernese Oberland attracts more pleasure seekers than any other portion of Switzerland. The mountains about Interlaken are not so high but that their summits may be reached, even by the invalid lowlanders of New England, who think the ascent of Mount Tom a wonderful achievement. That the invigorating air and the magnificent view from the top of the Jungfrau repays the effort required to climb it, admits of no doubt. In the fall of the year when the sere and yellow leaf illumines the hills and vales, with the most brilliant lights and delicate shades, it is no wonder that the enraptured breast of the amateur writer is agitated with poetic fire, though it must be confessed smoke and ashes are oftener stirred up than flame.

From the balcony of the Federal Council Hall in Bern, the mountains of the Oberland are plainly seen, and the autumnal tints, of the dying vegetation below the snow line, present a charming contrast to the white peaks that rear their lofty summits above, like the snow-ball blossom waving over a bed of flowers.

Bern upon the Aare is a quaint old city, retaining, more than any other of the Swiss towns do, its distinctive features that have characterized the canton, of which it is the capital, for generations past. The economy of its builders is indicated by extending the upper stories of the houses over the sidewalks, forming arched promenades on all of the principal streets, and by using the space beneath the sidewalks for cellars, in which, one would suppose from the appetizing odors that arise between the flagstones, the chief article of storage is *Schweizer Kase*.

In the city the Bears' Den and the Old Clock Tower are the most interesting features. The latter is located in the centre of the street, and at the striking

of the hours attracts a crowd of curious observers. Just before the dial marks the hour, a cock steps out and crows, immediately after, a procession of bronze bears promenade before a stone figure representing Time, who turns the hour glass, when the cock crows again. As the bears pass, another figure strikes the hour, the cock crows a third time and the minute hand goes on its way round, until the next hour, when the proceeding is repeated.

The Bears' Den is a circular excavation about twenty feet deep and fifty feet in diameter, lined with a stone wall and surmounted with an iron railing. Here the favorite and almost worshiped bears are kept, and have been from time immemorial, at the expense of the municipality. An English officer while visiting the Den in 1861, became so much interested, in watching the manœuvres of bruin, that he lost his balance and fell over the railing into the den. It was an unfortunate fall for him, for though fighting desperately, he was in a short time torn to pieces.

At Postgasse 33 is the headquarters of the Swiss and German mission. There we found the president of the mission and one of the Elders, and being with them on Sunday we had the pleasure of meeting with the Swiss Saints and of speaking to them in English, which seemed to interest them very much, and indicated to us that it does not matter so much what one says if he only says it under the right spirit.

Returning as far as Olten by the road that leads from Basel to Bern, we were hurried on to the beautiful city of Lucerne. These four leading cities of Switzerland; Zurich, Basel, Bern and Lucerne are situated at about equal distances from each other on the circumference of a circle, the railroad centre of which is Olten. It is almost impossible to get from one of these cities to another by rail, without passing through Olten.

The rapid flowing Reuss, that pours out from the lake of the Four Cantons, is spanned at Lucerne by four bridges, two modern and the others old and quaint in the extreme. The latter are closely covered, are lined with interesting paintings, representing scenes in the lives of St. Leger and St. Maurice, patron saints of the canton, and events from the national history. The Arsenal, one of the principal in the republic, is at the extremity of one of these bridges, and besides ten thousand stand of arms, contains the reputed bow and arrow of William Tell, with which he did so much to free his countrymen from the oppression of the Austrian tyrant Gessler.

At the extremity of the town is the famous Lion of Lucerne, a magnificent sandstone statue of a dying lion, pierced with a broken lance. It is cut out of the solid mountain, and executed by the celebrated Danish sculptor, Thorvaldsen, in commemoration of twenty-six officers and about eight hundred soldiers of the Swiss Guard, who fell in defence of the Palace of the Tuilleries in Paris, in the year 1792. The names of the soldiers are also inscribed on the face of the precipice.

From Lucerne the ascent of the Rigi, the most celebrated mountain of Switzerland, with the exception of Mt. Blanc, is made. A small steamer is taken, over an arm of the lake, to Vitznau, which is

reached in half an hour, and from there the most wonderful railroad in the world has been built to convey tourists to the top of the mountain. It winds its way through the town and around the mountain, rising at the rate of one foot in four to the summit, nearly four thousand five hundred feet, passing through a tunnel and at all points of the line, presenting a most beautiful view of mountain and lake.

At the top a magnificent hotel has been erected, at which many tourists find accommodations for a night every year. The scene at sunrise and at sunset from this mountain is, beyond description, interesting and lovely; the mountain chains around it can be plainly seen for three hundred miles, embracing every feature of Alpine scenery from the gentle sloping hills, upon which thousands of the small cattle of the country are browsing, to the rugged precipices, towering amid the clouds, arrayed in the whiteness of perpetual snow; while in every direction the blue waters of charming little lakes are discovered, nestling in the crevices and forming mirrors of crystal clearness, in which the panorama of mountain heights is seen again. The view from the Rigi is so grand that it entices, on an average, about forty-five thousand visitors annually.

De Vallibus.

BITS OF TRAVEL: ON LAKE LUCERNE

De Vallibus

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BITS OF TRAVEL.

IX.

ON LAKE LUCERNE.

The little steamers on Lake Lucerne, during the summer season, are crowded with enthusiastic tourists, whose hearts swell in admiration of the strikingly grand and picturesque scenery of the lake and surrounding mountains. There is indeed no place in the Alps more delightful. Possessing so many and varied natural attractions — snow-clad peaks, deep and dangerous ravines, babbling

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brooks, flowing through miniature valleys, and roaring cataracts tumbling over precipitous crags, making up, with the irregular expanse of dark blue waters of the lovely lake, a grand ensemble of Nature's most attractive features, this may be called the paradise of Switzerland.

Shortly after leaving Lucerne, an excellent view of the Rigi is obtained. Near its base, farm houses, gardens and fruit trees cover the graceful slopes that lead to forests and green pastures, which

encircle it above and crown its summit. Opposite the Rigi, Pilatus rises abruptly from the shore. Its barren and rugged peaks, seldom entirely free from cloud or mist, frown grimly over the cheerful landscape, presenting a marked contrast to the pastoral scene on the other side of the lake.

At Brunnen, on the east shore, the south arm of the lake, called the Lake of Uri, commences. The banks approach each other, and the peaks rise almost perpendicularly from the water, often to so great an altitude that their tops are covered with snow or veiled in mist. On the west bank of the narrow lake the guides direct attention to a pyramid of rock, rising from the surface of the water eighty feet. On its face appears an inscription in large letters of gold, to the memory of Schiller, "the Bard of Tell." There is another inscription on the same rock to a young Swiss officer, who accidentally lost his life at this place several years ago.

About a mile from here are the three springs of the Rutli, which trickle from an artificially planted rock, surrounded with pleasant grounds. This spot is owned by the Swiss confederation, deriving its importance from the historic interest attached to it, and is described in the following lines from Schiller's poem, "William Tell."

"On the lake's left bank,

As we sail hence to Brunnen, right against
The Mythenstein, deep hidden in the wood
A meadow lies, by shepherds called the Rootli,
Because the wood has been uprooted there.
'Tis where our canton's bound'ries verge on
yours;

Thither by lonely bypaths let us wend
At midnight and deliberate o'er our plans."

At this romantic place, on the memorable night of November 7, 1307, thirty-three men met and entered into a solemn compact to be faithful to each other, and never to rest until the Austrian oppressor was driven from the land. Tradition relates that on the spot where the three confederate leaders, Werner Stauffacher

of Schwyz, Arnold of Unterwalden and Walter Fürst of Uri, took the oath, three fountains sprang up and were afterwards enclosed in a hut built over them.

On a ledge of rock at the foot of the Axenberg, shaded by overhanging trees and washed by the waters of the lake, stands the far-famed Tell's Chapel. It is said to be located on the spot where the illustrious Swiss patriot landed when he jumped ashore from Gessler's boat, and is held dear to the memory of the inhabitants for many miles around to the present day. The chapel contains frescoes representing scenes in the life of Tell. On a certain Sunday in each year mass is performed in it, and boat loads of gaily attired peasants flock from all parts of the lake shore to attend. Usually a patriotic discourse is delivered, and a general holiday indulged in by the people. It is not far from this place that the passes of the Axenstrasse are seen. Chromos and engravings of the picturesque tunnels cut through the calcareous rock, and of the projecting roadway hanging alarmingly over the lake, are to be found in all civilized countries, which fact alone indicates how beautiful and interesting are the scenes in this region.

A few minutes after passing the Chapel the little town of Fluelen becomes visible, nestling in a corner of the towering hills that close in together, bounding the lake and leaving only room between for the passage of the Reuss, which at this point has but attained the size of an inconsiderable brook. Two miles from Fluelen is Altorf, capital of the canton Uri, containing nearly three thousand inhabitants. It is a pleasant little town, around which centres a great deal of interest as being the traditional scene of the wonderful exploits of Tell, in the great part he is supposed to have taken in the liberation of his country from the yoke of Austrian tyranny. It may be well here to observe that while tradition speaks with warm enthusiasm of William Tell, and enshrines his memory among

the patriots, with a victor's crown, the written history of Switzerland fails even to mention his name.

However, in Altorf a colossal statue is erected to his memory on the spot, it is said, from which the intrepid archer aimed at the apple placed on the head of his son, at the command of Gessler. About one hundred and fifty paces distant, and around a corner of a modern street, is a fountain, which occupies the place where the old lime tree stood against which was placed the fearless boy to await the arrow from his father's bow. A party of young ladies from Salt Lake City were visiting these scenes a few summers ago, and were greatly interested in the story of the guide, as he pointed out the various points of this wonderful feat of the renowned archer. What particularly puzzled one of the ladies was how in the world Tell, or any other man could shoot around the corner of the street.

It is but a short distance to Bürglen, a picturesque village situated on a commanding height, and reputed to be the birthplace and home of Tell; a fitting scene to call up in the hero's heart that grand and patriotic thought that seemed to swell within his breast when he exclaimed:

"Ye crags and peaks I'm with you once again!
I hold to you the hands you first beheld,
To show they still are free. Methinks I hear
A spirit in your echoes answer me,
And bid your tenant welcome to his home again."

From Fluelen the diligence journey over the magnificent pass of St. Gotthard is commenced, an account of which, taken under the difficulties of winter, will be the subject for our next. *De Vallibus.*

BITS OF TRAVEL.

X.

ST. GOTTHARD PASS.

The season when travel in the Alps is considered the most enjoyable by European tourists commences in May and closes in the early days of October. During the latter month, however, many are attracted to the lower slopes of the majestic mountains by the autumnal tints of the dying vegetation, which clothes the hillsides in robes of exquisite coloring, and when illuminated by the rays of the rising or setting sun, reflected back from the white crests above, presents the most splendid *tableaux vivants* of mountain scenery in the world. Later than

October the mountain passes are considered dangerous, and are seldom traversed by pleasure seekers, the traffic being confined to commercial travelers and the mail, with an occasional venturesome tourist, who is willing to run the risk of delay and exposure for the sake of witnessing the carnival of King Winter held in his favorite Alpine home, where he is throned, in spotless robes, among the loveliest valleys, surrounded by towering peaks reaching to the sky, which likewise own his sway.

It so happened that we were obliged to make the Swiss tour late in the season, and to cross the mountain barrier into

Italy, like Napoleon and his army, in the dead of winter. The Reuss, across which the road passes many times in the ascent to St. Gotthard, is crowded between the precipitous cliffs, which form its banks and raise their snowy heads aloft thousands of feet. Its waters roar dismally from below as they leap over their rough bed and are lashed into fury by the jutting rocks.

We commenced the journey by *diligence*, stage coach, at Fluelen, and reached Wasen in good time, shortly after crossing the third bridge, or Pfaffensprung, Priest's Leap, named from the tradition that a monk once leaped across the stream at this place with a girl in his arms. The view from Wasen is very beautiful in both directions. The ascent becoming more abrupt as we leave the little village, makes our progress slow, but gradually we climb the hilly road, winding through the gorge and crossing the stream often, until we reach the eighth bridge, called the Teufels-brücke, or Devil's Bridge, having attained an altitude of nearly five thousand feet. The river here falls in a beautiful cascade into an abyss one hundred feet below, while its spray bedews the bridge above. One is likely, while gazing over the steep banks, to encounter the "hatroque," the name given by the natives to the wind, which blows in such sudden gusts here as often to endanger the hats of unwary strangers. Twenty feet below, where this fine granite bridge now spans the river in a single arch, is the time-worn structure of a hundred years ago, covered over with moss and lichen, but still a lasting memento of a hard fought battle, which occurred between the Austrians and French in the year 1799.

The Austrians had taken up a strong position near the bridge, but were unable to withstand the impetuous attack of the French. They therefore blew up the small side-arch nearest them, in consequence of which hundreds of soldiers were precipitated into the abyss and communication cut off. The French then

scaled the right bank of the Reuss, and compelled the Austrians to retire in the night. Their success, however, was of short duration. A month after, Suwarow, with an army of Russians, marched over the St. Gotthard and pressed hard upon the French. The latter had taken up quarters above the bridge and just below the Urner Loch, a tunnel seventy yards long cut through the solid rock, and originally only broad enough for pedestrians and horses, but at that time widened out so as to admit a platoon of soldiers. This tunnel had been carefully filled with masses of rock and walled up, but the Russians removed the obstacles and reopened the road. As they emerged from the tunnel they were exposed to a murderous fire from the French, in spite of which, however, they forced a passage and drove their enemy back as far as the Lake of Lucerne.

The peaceful valley of Urseren, which is reached soon after emerging from the wild cañon below, presents a striking appearance. In the summer time it is no doubt a charming place—a quiet vale in the tops of the mountains, carpeted with luxuriant vegetation, upon which the small black cattle of the Alps graze unmolested. The rippling stream, meandering through its entire length, divides the valley and waters its pastures. The fourteen hundred inhabitants are subject to the cold of winter eight months in the year, and often require fires during the summer nights. They gain a livelihood by feeding cattle and conveying passengers and goods over the St. Gotthard. As we saw this nook in the mountains it was a broad expanse of snow, dreary and forbidding in the extreme. Andermatt, the chief village of the valley, contains a church believed to date back to the time of the Lombards; adjoining it is the charnel-house, in which are numerous skulls bearing inscriptions. It is a curious custom in some parts of Switzerland, and prevails even to the present day, on the occasional opening of the family vaults, for surviving members to convey the

skulls of their lamented dead to the charnel-house, where, with what are considered appropriate inscriptions painted on them, they are arranged as ornaments of the buildings, and are exhibited as sacred relics of the dear departed.

Just beyond Andermatt we were obliged to leave the comfortable old *diligence* and take to sleds, which were rude affairs, resembling the pictures we have seen of Laplander's sledges. Each sled would hold two passengers, or their equivalent in goods or baggage, and a driver, who sat as much outside as within the runners. They were drawn by a single horse, around whose neck tinkled a tiny bell, and each was provided with a dim lantern. By the time all the baggage had been loaded and we were ready to resume our journey, we presented the appearance of an imposing cavalcade of upwards of twenty sleds, such as we have read about accompanying young Russian noblemen upon their overland winter journeys to pay their addresses to their betrothed, carrying with them great quantities of presents.

We took up our line of march, going slowly, just as the last glimmering of the sunlight faded away from the tops of the mountains in the east, and as the large, airy snowflakes began to fall around us threateningly. We passed through Hospenthal as it was getting dark. Here the first act of extortion was practiced upon us by the cunning drivers, who made a demand for the usual gratuity before going farther. They then repaired to the Meyerhof, and having taken what appeared to be a liberal draught of a stimulating beverage, resumed their seats and drove on. The ascent to the Pass of St. Gotthard is made by a winding road through a desolate valley, an arm of which reaches clear up to the summit, seven thousand feet above the sea, where the road passes between several small lakes. Here we halted a few moments while the straps on the baggage sleds were being tightened, and preparations made for the descent.

We felt the solitude of Nature as we peered out upon the dismal waste of snow around us, only relieved by tall trees breaking through and coated over with hoary frost, sparkling with the light of diamonds as the flickering rays from our lanterns fell upon them.

On the south side of the pass the snow falls to a great depth; often thirty or forty feet. Avalanches are frequent, the road being blocked up by vast slides of snow, that sometimes do not melt entirely away during the whole summer. The downward path is exceedingly steep and tortuous, and when we passed over it, was very narrow and dangerous, being broken through the snow by the sleds that preceded us. Down the narrow defile we followed each other, whenever possible, at a slow trotting pace. The intricate windings of the road and steep declivity would often show us the dancing lights of the forward sleds below us headed in three directions, the merry little bells being faintly heard as the horses shook the falling snow from their manes. Once a poor beast missed his footing and slipped half over the side of the trodden road, and being unable to rise again his load was put upon another sled, the remaining ones passed over him and he was left in the snow.

By this incident we were assured that a departure from the beaten path would be fatal, and the narrowness of the road, which was not more than four feet wide, gave us gloomy forebodings, not at all relieved by the conduct of our driver, who seemed to be under the influence of the last strong cup, taken at a friendly Hospice just after leaving the summit. The Hospices are often the salvation of travelers lost in the snow. They are managed by orders of priests and are provided with beds and provisions for poor travelers, who are fed gratuitously. At the one referred to upwards of ten thousand persons are entertained annually. There are also kept at the Hospices the fine race of Newfoundland dogs, which are employed in the humane

service of life-saving when occasion requires.

We had made very good progress down the mountain, and were beginning to feel relieved of anxiety, when an accident occurred that revived all our distrust of the driver and gave us great affright.

Just before crossing a bridge that spanned the ravine, in the bottom of which, a hundred feet below, the dark, rumbling river rolled on, sending up a dismal sound, we were suddenly alarmed by a piercing cry. It came from the occupants of the sled in front of us; and looking ahead, as well as we could in the darkness, we saw them standing, their faces blanched and hair on end, while their sleigh sped on within an inch of the edge of the bridge. It carried them safely over, however, but was very near plunging them into the abyss below. We had no

sooner recovered from this alarm and congratulated ourselves on crossing the bridge in safety, than we were thrown into greater distress. We were tipped out into the snow, our sled on top of us, and our heads dangling over the the side of the precipice, with eternity fearfully near. With the driver's help, however, we soon righted up the sled and took our seats again, suffering only a nervous shock and the loss of a hat, which was lodged on the snowy bank sixty feet below, but entirely beyond recovery.

The remainder of the journey was made in safety, and leaving the sleds at Faido, we entered a *diligence* and rolled into the ancient Italian town of Bellinzona as the gray dawn broke, where, before our winter's night in an Alpine pass, we had seen the fading light of the setting sun.

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VII.

ZURICH AND BASEL.

THE journey from Munich to eastern Switzerland is made by rail, over a winding road, through fertile valleys and gradually rising foothills that lead to the mountain homes of the free and hardy Swiss. It is a beautiful ride from the Bavarian plains toward the Alpine heights dimly seen towering among the clouds

in the western horizon. It corresponds somewhat with that portion of the route on the Union Pacific Railroad from Nebraska over the Black Hills to the snow capped peaks of the Wasatch; and as we were anticipating the welcome of friends among the Elders laboring in the Swiss and German mission, our feelings might be compared to those that well up the heart of a returning missionary as

he approaches the head of Echo cañon and feels again that he is at home.

The long ride by rail is relieved at Lindau on the coast of Lake Constance, where we board a small steamer and enjoy an hours ride over the smooth surface of the crystal water, landing on the western shore at Romanshorn. Here we enter the waiting cars and are whirled away past Winterthur and Frauenfeld to Zurich, the chief manufacturing and commercial city of eastern Switzerland. The attractions of Zurich are mainly in its beautiful, long, narrow lake with its bordering villages and hamlets, and the magnificent scenery that surrounds the city, within whose limits every visitor seeks the town library, in which are shown autograph letters of Henry IV, of France, Lady Jane Grey, and Frederick the Great. The *Grossmünster* or cathedral is an imposing structure and worthy a visit, but the most important of all the buildings of Zurich is the Polytechnicon, situated upon a commanding eminence, from which, in the morning, a charming view of the town, lake and surrounding mountains is obtained; within is a valuable collection of mineral and geological specimens, admirably arranged. Its collection from natural history is one of the completest in Europe, embracing nearly everything from a snowbird to a buffalo. Walking down the Höhe promenade, a lovely avenue of lime trees, with one of the Elders, whom we found laboring in this district, we could but enjoy the invigorating air, the mountain scenes around us and the companionship of one who told us of the people and of his daily experiences among them.

Tourists, as a general thing, learn very little of the every day life of the natives of those countries through which they journey. They usually travel by a prepared programme, which allows them but a limited time in each place, and not unfrequently their stoppages are at hotels which are almost entirely patronized by their fellow tourists. They make the customary round of sight-seeing, and

proceed on their way to the next place, where the same routine is repeated; thus, practically, they know nothing of the people, their customs and manner of living, and might almost as well have stayed at home and read the illustrated books of travel, which glow with warm descriptions, and do better justice to the scenes, historic incidents, legends, and artistic and natural attractiveness of the famous places of the world, than it is possible for flying tourists to do, who never leave the beaten track. For this reason the Elders are much more favorably situated than those who go abroad for pleasure. They see the people at home, and are acquainted with their ways, their feelings and circumstances, and are capable of forming correct opinions of the countries they visit and of the people among whom they temporarily dwell.

As we left the eastern metropolis, on our way to Basel, we caught a glimpse of rural life that we hope is not characteristic of the district, though it seemed to be considered by the native passengers who were our fellow travelers, as not at all an unusual sight. In a field by the side of the road, were hitched to one of their heavy, cumbersome and unwieldy plows, two cows, an old raw-boned horse and a woman; a stalwart son of the soil holding the plow and driving the curious team.

At Basel we found ourselves again on the banks of the beautiful Rhine, in a quaint old town with narrow, crooked streets, that happened, on the day of our arrival, to be filled with peasants from the surrounding country, who had come to attend the fair. Curious indeed were their costumes and the means of enjoyment in which they seemed to delight. The penny shows, refreshment buffets and trading stands that always accompany the fairs of England were not wanting here; boating on the wide and serene river seemed also to be a favorite pastime with the crowds who flocked to the city. The ferry boat, operated by the

current and managed by a tongue rope, was crowded every trip with the delighted visitors who sought the woods and picnic grounds on the other side.

We visited the antiquated cathedral, remarkable for its irregular court and frescoed stairways; and the monument of St. Jacob, recently erected to the memory of thirteen hundred valiant Swiss who fell in 1444 fighting for the liberties of their country. The French, numbering about thirty thousand irregular troops, had assembled near the frontier, and were led by the Dauphin against the Confederates, who were stationed at Farnsburg, about fifteen miles south-east

of Basel. On their approach, the little band of Swiss soldiers immediately attempted to force their way to the city. After a desperate struggle, they were all cut to pieces near the village of St. Jacob, where the last and bloodiest struggle took place.

The monument represents Helvetia in armor, with a wreath, and at the base four falling soldiers, in marble. It is located over the burial place of the unfortunate patriots whose valor it commemorates, and is at the extremity of the city, where a winding country road leads in, and not far from a sparkling fountain.

De Vallibus.